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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 19th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Friday, 12 February 1993, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. ENNACEUR (Tunisia)

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Question of the realization in all countries of the economic, social and cultural rights contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and study of special problems which the developing countries face in their efforts to achieve these human rights, including: problems related to the right to enjoy an adequate standard of living; foreign debt, economic adjustment policies and their effects on the full enjoyment of human rights and, in particular, on the implementation of the Declaration on the Right to Development (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

QUESTION OF THE REALIZATION IN ALL COUNTRIES OF THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS CONTAINED IN THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND IN THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS, AND STUDY OF SPECIAL PROBLEMS WHICH THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES FACE IN THEIR EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE THESE HUMAN RIGHTS, INCLUDING: PROBLEMS RELATED TO THE RIGHT TO ENJOY AN ADEQUATE STANDARD OF LIVING; FOREIGN DEBT, ECONOMIC ADJUSTMENT POLICIES AND THEIR EFFECTS ON THE FULL ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND, IN PARTICULAR, ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT (agenda item 7) (continued) (E/CN.4/1993/15 and 77; E/CN.4/1992/9; E/CN.4/Sub.2/1992/16).

QUESTION OF THE REALIZATION OF THE RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT (agenda item 8) (continued) (E/CN.4/1993/16; E/CN.4/1993/NGO/3; E/CN.4/1990/9/Rev.1)

STATUS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS (agenda item 17) (continued) (E/CN.4/1993/69; E/C.12/1988/1; CCPR/C/2/Rev.3)

EFFECTIVE FUNCTIONING OF BODIES ESTABLISHED PURSUANT TO UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS INSTRUMENTS (agenda item 18) (continued) (A/47/628).

1. Ms. SLESZYNSKA (Christian Democrat International) said her organization was pleased at the follow-up given by the Commission to the implementation of the Declaration on the Right to Development, which had become all the more urgent at a time when the risks of a trade war and protectionism were growing.

2. The concept of the right to development had won the support of the world's great spiritual currents. For example, in his message delivered for the celebration of "World Peace Day" on 18 January 1993, His Holiness the Pope had pointed to extreme poverty as a threat to peace and human dignity and thus to the peaceful development of society. By condemning extreme poverty and the structural mechanisms that generated it, the Pope had sought to underscore the importance of ensuring the true exercise of the right to development through structures capable of equitably distributing wealth.

3. It was important to redirect development cooperation policies so as to make the right to development a reality for peoples oppressed by poverty and extreme poverty and one of the pillars of the new world order.

4. Neither the experience of socialism nor the application of capitalist liberalism had produced a solution to the problems of the developing countries. The developing world should never again be treated as a testing ground for the ideas of the industrialized world. The capitalist countries of the North must rethink their relations with the countries of the South. Economic processes must take on a human face.

5. Ms. GUZMÀN (Latin American Federation of Associations of Relatives of Disappeared Detainees) said that the economic situation in a number of Latin American countries was very difficult.

6. In Colombia, following a wave of closures and privatizations of State enterprises, more than 24,000 public employees had been dismissed. The

economy had grown by 2.5 per cent, but a population increase of the same proportion meant that the per capita gross domestic product had remained unchanged. Underemployment and part-time employment were on the rise, as was the crime rate. More than 10 million persons were living in dire poverty. Social security covered just 18 per cent of the persons employed, and education and public services reached only a small portion of the population.

7. Although the Government of Colombia had promised to increase investment in the social sector to fight poverty and improve education and health, the 1993 budget planned to reduce such investment. Estimates for the military would be 106 million pesos in 1993, compared with 73 million for health and 5 million for cultural activities and sports.

8. In El Salvador, the excessive accumulation of capital in the hands of a privileged few continued to be at the root of poverty in that country; the richest 10 per cent held 36 per cent of the country's wealth, while 70 per cent of the population had to make do with 34 per cent. Only 50 per cent of the active population had full-time employment. Extreme poverty was widespread, health care was poor, and the illiteracy rate was 57 per cent. Budgetary estimates for education and health had barely increased in 1993. Despite the end of the armed conflict and the provision in the peace agreements for a reduction of the armed forces by 50 per cent, defence estimates in the 1993 budget had hardly fallen from 14 per cent in 1992 to 11 per cent in 1993.

9. Mr. PORRET (International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR)) said that social questions would take on enormous importance in the coming decade; in systems of economic liberalism and socialism alike, the centralization of production had often had serious consequences for the economy and the environment and, hence, for society as a whole. For example, the extensive use of pesticides for cultivating cotton in central Asia had damaged the health of the inhabitants and had polluted the soil. In Côte d'Ivoire and, to a lesser extend, in Senegal the intensive cultivation of cacao and groundnuts had resulted in small producers encountering great difficulties when the prices of those products had declined.

10. In some countries, dictatorship, civil war or famine had led to the impoverishment of the population. The role of non-governmental organizations in dealing with such grass-roots situations was irreplaceable. IFOR wondered, however, whether large-scale assistance operations were effective and whether their real goals were to provide humanitarian aid or to demonstrate power. It was deeply concerned about what might happen in Somalia if, following their show of force, the United States troops were to leave too precipitately.

11. The developing countries were not alone in experiencing severe social problems. In Europe and in developed countries elsewhere, a wave of unemployment had led to a resurgence of Fascist and xenophobic movements. The brutal dismissal of employees, with scant regard for their physical and emotional well-being, constituted a violation of the right to work. As the economic situation was not likely to improve in the near future, the Commission should focus on those problems and intensify its cooperation with the International Labour Organisation.

12. In the past, the State had played a stabilizing role by creating employment for persons who had difficulty finding work on the free market. Recently, however, States seemed to have changed their policy, forgetting that the main reason for their existence was to serve the population and not to maximize profits.

13. In times of recession, women were often the first to lose their benefits. One example was the proposal in Switzerland to raise the age of retirement for women from 62 to 64, without any compensation, although throughout their working lives they had also had children to raise.

14. Social problems deserved the special attention of the Commission, and in that context, IFOR was pleased that a Special Rapporteur had been appointed on the question of extreme poverty.

15. Mr. LECKIE (Habitat International Coalition) said that the United Nations must stop making an artificial distinction between civil and political rights and economic, social and cultural rights. A unified approach was needed.

16. In his report (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1992/16) the Special Rapporteur on the realization of economic, social and cultural rights, Mr. Türk, recognized that, owing to such factors as structural adjustment, debt and increasingly unequal income distribution, both within and between States, the right to housing, education, health, food and employment continued to be denied. The Special Rapporteur's conclusions and recommendations should be approved and acted upon by the Commission, other human rights bodies and all Governments.

17. Particular attention should be paid to the adverse consequences for human rights of the policies and funding practices of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. There was a clear relationship between the often aggressive policies of those Bretton Woods institutions and human rights violations. The Commission should encourage them to implement the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur and report back to the Commission on what steps they had taken to halt their funding for projects which violated economic, social and cultural rights and to incorporate human rights concerns into all aspects of their programmes, policies and projects.

18. The Commission should support the appointment by the Sub-Commission of a special rapporteur on human rights and income distribution to explore the impact on human rights of the disturbing global trend towards unequal income, both within and between nations.

19. His organization agreed with the Special Rapporteur concerning the use of indicators to assess State compliance with economic, social and cultural rights. Another noteworthy initiative was that of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, namely, its adoption of general comments, including its General Comment No. 4 on the right to adequate housing, which had been useful at grass-roots level for groups struggling to articulate their demands for housing rights.

20. The Committee's determination to promote compliance by States with their obligations concerning housing rights under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights had been demonstrated recently in the

cases of the Dominican Republic and Panama, two States parties to the Covenant in which massive forced evictions had taken place. The Committee had offered to send a mission to those two countries to assist them in promoting full implementation of the Covenant. No replies had been received from either Government and the Commission should encourage them to respond favourably to the Committee's offer.

21. More generally, the Committee had supported the adoption of an optional protocol to the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights that would allow the victims of violations of such rights to appeal to a judicial United Nations body for legal redress. The Commission should support the adoption of such a protocol, and all Member States should begin the necessary procedure for its adoption.

22. The Commission should firmly support the work of the Sub-Commission's Expert on the right to adequate housing, so as to clarify the rights of the more than 1 billion homeless and inadequately housed persons throughout the world.

23. Mr. HAVINI (International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs) said that he was the only representative of the indigenous Bougainvilleans still able to travel. As his travel document would soon expire and would not be renewed by the authorities of Papua New Guinea, his statement might well represent his last chance to appeal to the Commission. Many Bougainvillean leaders had had their passports revoked, although they had not committed any crimes.

24. At its 1992 session, the Sub-Commission had adopted resolution 1992/19 calling upon the Government of Papua New Guinea to restore without delay freedom of movement to the inhabitants of Bougainville and noting the continuing allegations of human rights violations on the island.

25. Bougainville had been under siege for three years. Papua New Guinea had violated the two peace agreements of 1990 and 1991 concluded with Bougainville and had stepped up its violations of the human rights of the civilian population in an attempt to prevent it from expressing its desire for self-determination. The Papua New Guinea forces, armed principally by Australia, had carried out massive attacks against Bougainville, even using chemical weapons, with resultant violation of all its people's social, cultural and economic rights. Unless the Commission brought pressure to bear on the Government of Papua New Guinea, it would appear to be acquiescing in gross human rights violations and even genocide.

26. If the international community took no action, the Government of Papua New Guinea would assume that it had a licence to do as it pleased. Part of the capital, Arawa, had already been destroyed in heavy shelling: thousands of homes had been destroyed, their occupants being forcibly moved to centres under military control; the women had been placed in brothels for the enjoyment of the Papua New Guinea military; and the rape of young boys and extrajudicial executions were commonplace. An undeclared state of emergency had been in effect in Bougainville for the past four years, and the total blockade of the island by the Papua New Guinea Government constituted a violation of the economic, cultural and social rights of all Bougainvilleans.

27. He urged the international human rights organizations to express their concern to the Commission about the situation in Bougainville. The Commission must send a fact-finding mission to look into the allegations of human rights violations. The international community must support the peace initiatives proposed in many international forums and assist in the search for a negotiated democratic solution.

28. Ms. LACOURT (International Federation - Terre des Hommes) said that, in addition to the other problems facing Cambodia, the Commission should also consider the disastrous situation in the country in terms of economic, social and cultural rights. Cambodia had the highest mortality rate in the world for children under five, while the mortality rate for pregnant women and women in childbirth was double that of Africa or India. It also had the world's highest rate of handicapped people and the highest annual incidence of tuberculosis. Only 12 per cent of the rural population had access to drinking water.

29. The bulk of the population lived in dire poverty, in a climate of economic anarchy, reflected in a rate of inflation which, in September 1992 alone, reached 82 per cent. Foreign businessmen made essentially speculative investments which did nothing to generate employment. There was no investment in the agricultural sector and the presence of vast numbers of land-mines meant there was little hope of a rapid return to normal rural life. There was little or no prospect of the repatriated refugees returning to self-sufficient activity and a large part of the population still had no income whatsoever.

30. The hopes aroused by the arrival of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) had given way to growing despair, as most Cambodians did not feel free or safe. UNTAC and the international community had made laudable efforts and distinct progress, but the deadlines set were unrealistic and failed to take account of the facts in Cambodia and the extremely precarious situation of its population. It was essential also that the financial pledges made at the Tokyo Conference should be swiftly implemented.

31. The machinery of Government was slowly breaking down, with unprecedented corruption and physical violence rife in all areas. If the current climate persisted, the holding of the elections scheduled for 23 to 25 May 1993 could be seriously jeopardized, leaving behind a deteriorating and explosive situation. The work of reviewing the country's legal and juridical structures, begun by UNTAC, could help remedy the situation and should be continued.

32. The stubborn refusal of the Khmers Rouges to honour their commitments and participate in the implementation of the peace plan had been a major stumbling block in recent years. Their numerous atrocities and other outrageous behaviour, in flagrant breach of all their commitments, meant that the Khmers Rouges had excluded themselves from the peace process and had thereby lost all claim to legitimacy. While paying lip-service to the peace process, they had resumed their original identity as formidable and shrewd guerrilla fighters, seeking to establish total domination of the country.

33. She welcomed the initiatives taken to prolong the United Nations presence in Cambodia, but called on the Commission to urge all Governments and relevant intergovernmental organizations to exclude the Khmer Rouge from the machinery for implementing the peace plan, to send a special rapporteur to Cambodia and to maintain a presence of the Centre for Human Rights in Phnom Penh.

34. Mr. KOSONEN (Finland) said that the optimism felt at the beginning of the decade regarding the prospects for increasing respect for human rights had proved to be unjustified, since violations of even the most elementary human rights continued to occur in all parts of the world, including Europe. It was urgent, therefore, to focus efforts on the full implementation of the existing body of international human rights standards.

35. Regrettably, however, many States were still not parties to all those instruments and his delegation urged all States to ratify or accede to them, with as few reservations as possible, and to withdraw any reservations they might have lodged. For those international instruments to be effective, however, proper national implementation was needed through appropriate legislation, measures to disseminate information on the relevant standards and activities by non-governmental organizations. The Nordic institution of the ombudsman could also serve as a valuable model. Although the main emphasis should henceforth be on implementation, there was still room for further standard-setting activities, particularly with regard to the rights of indigenous peoples and the protection of human rights defenders.

36. The main responsibility for applying human rights instruments lay with the States parties, but the treaty bodies also had an important complementary role to play. It was vital to ensure that the States parties submitted their reports without excessive delays and provided the relevant information in the areas specified.

37. Efforts should be made to ensure that the resources of the Centre for Human Rights were commensurate with its increased responsibilities, particularly its important work of disseminating human rights information. In that connection, the meetings of the persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies had been useful in producing valuable recommendations on questions such as the effectiveness of those bodies and cooperation between them.

38. The question of improving the implementation of existing human rights standards and instruments would be on the agenda of the forthcoming World Conference on Human Rights which would provide a unique opportunity of evaluating the situation, a process to which his delegation intended to contribute.

39. Mr. GARRETON (Chile) said that the enjoyment of fundamental rights was possible only in a democratic environment, where basic human necessities were satisfied and the integrity of the person was respected. The right to democracy covered all civil and political rights while the right to development covered all economic, social and cultural rights, as recognized by the Declaration on the Right to Development, adopted by the General Assembly on 4 December 1986. As the Secretary-General stressed in his report (E/CN.4/1993/16), the right to popular participation and the right to self-determination were also important aspects of the right to development.

40. Development was frequently confused with mere economic growth and he welcomed the growing acceptance in recent years of a more human dimension, whereby education and health were recognized as indicators of development. He also welcomed the decision taken at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to establish a Commission on Sustainable Development, with which the Commission on Human Rights should work closely. He also endorsed the Secretary-General's proposal that the Commission should insist that official development aid be geared towards social priorities.

41. His Government attached particular importance to the World Summit for Social Development, to be held in 1995, which would have the important task of defining the political, social and economic aspects of social development. It should not be a mere event but should result in the implementation of policies to overcome poverty and achieve sustainable development.

42. Although the main impetus for achieving the right to development must be at the national level, the international community should also show solidarity and should ensure that development cooperation focused on social goals as well as on the financial and productive sectors.

43. The major long-standing obstacles to the realization of the right to development had still not been removed, particularly the unfavourable terms of trade faced by the developing countries and the burden of external debt upon them. In many parts of Latin America, the basic necessities of life could not be met while the chronic poverty of Africa was being compounded by prolonged drought. In 1991, official development assistance had been barely 0.3 per cent of the gross national product of the donor countries. International development cooperation must be increased to a level worthy of the donor countries to enable the poor to reach the minimum levels compatible with human dignity.

44. Mr. GOONETILLEKE (Sri Lanka) said that, while differences in ideology and levels of development tended to determine which set of rights States chose to emphasize, his delegation wished to stress the indivisible nature of all human rights, as reaffirmed in article 6 of the Declaration on the Right to Development. It was regrettable, therefore, that the work of the Commission was increasingly confined to condemning violations of civil and political rights. It must address the link between those rights and economic, social and cultural rights, as well as the obstacles faced by individuals and States in achieving the totality of those rights.

45. The right to development was a human right and not merely an economic objective, as some maintained, and its individual and collective aspects were inextricable. In that connection, he agreed with the conclusion in the Secretary-General's report (E/CN.4/1993/16) that participation was at the heart of the right to development. In other words, food, health, education, housing and employment were essential for the full enjoyment of democracy and of civil and political rights.

46. Any international initiative aimed at the realization of the right to development needed to address the obstacles to that process and he thus welcomed the valuable reports submitted to the Sub-Commission by its Special Rapporteur on the realization of economic, social and cultural rights

(E/CN.4/Sub.2/1991/17 and E/CN.4/Sub.2/1992/16), which established a link between human rights issues and the impact of structural adjustment policies, the role of international lending institutions and debt problems. Nevertheless, as the Secretary-General pointed out in paragraph 22 of his report, the biggest obstacle to the realization of the right to development was the ever-widening gap between developed and developing countries, aggravated by trade barriers, debts, lack of technology transfer and restrictive immigration policies.

47. His delegation agreed with the spirit of most of the Secretary-General's proposals, particularly those highlighting the importance of incorporating the requirements for the realization of the right to development into national and international policy-making. However, caution should be exercised to avoid introducing conditionality or the use of arbitrary indicators to measure human rights criteria.

48. Together with the other bodies responsible, the Commission should approach the right to development in a more active and comprehensive way. There was no reason, for example, why its special rapporteurs and working groups or the advisory services of the Centre for Human Rights should deal exclusively with civil and political rights issues. He thus welcomed the Secretary-General's proposal that Governments should bring sample projects on the effective implementation of the right to development to the attention of the Centre, since many developing countries had positive achievements in that area which the Commission should not overlook. Non-governmental organizations should also be encouraged to make use of their invaluable field experience and be more active in promoting the right to development internationally. Lastly, that right should be given high priority at the forthcoming World Conference on Human Rights.

49. Mr. BROTODININGRAT (Indonesia) said that, like the right to self-determination, the right to development was one to which both individuals and peoples as collective entities could lay claim. In that connection, he welcomed the fact that the concept of the indivisibility of all aspects of human rights was becoming increasingly recognized, as reflected, inter alia, in the statement of the Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Countries at their last Summit Meeting, in which they had emphasized the indivisible nature of human rights but expressed concern at the neglect of economic, social and cultural rights.

50. In his delegation's view, that concern was well justified. The Commission spoke of country situations, but always in connection with civil and political rights and never with economic, social and cultural rights. Pressure was continually being exerted on other United Nations bodies and in the economic and social fields to integrate human rights considerations into their activities, but socio-economic and development considerations were conveniently forgotten in dealing with human rights issues. The Commission must match its concern about freedom from fear with an equally serious interest in freedom from want.

51. There was a growing awareness of the need to respect the right of individuals to participate actively in, and benefit fully from, national development, but the extent to which such individual rights could be enjoyed

would depend on the fulfilment in the global context of the right to development of the peoples or States to which the individual belonged. The exercise of the right to development at the global level should be manifested in international cooperation to ensure development and promote a new international economic order based on sovereign equality, interdependence and mutual benefit. The concept of international accountability should also be introduced into the realization of the right at the global level.

52. There was a disturbing tendency to capitalize on the interrelationship between development, human rights and democracy by emphasizing the competitive, or even contradictory, aspects of that interrelationship. Statements were often made rejecting consideration of development as a prerequisite for the enjoyment of human rights and the realization of democracy and stressing, instead, human rights and democracy as prerequisites for development.

53. His own delegation believed that development facilitated efforts to promote the enjoyment of human rights and the process of democratization. The Declaration on the Right to Development defined development as a comprehensive economic, social, cultural and political process, which aimed at the constant improvement of the well-being of the entire population and of all individuals, on the basis of their active, free and meaningful participation in development and in the fair distribution of the benefits resulting therefrom. Human rights and democracy were thus clearly part and parcel of development.

54. His delegation considered that any attempt to use human rights as a condition for extending socio-economic assistance should be rejected, since such conditionality would ignore the relevance of the economic, social and cultural aspect of human rights; contradict the established international principle of sovereign equality between donor and recipient countries, and the sovereign right of the recipient country to determine its own political, economic and social systems; and enshrine the false and insulting proposition that human rights violations occurred only in recipient countries and never in donor countries.

55. Mr. MUSA HITAM (Malaysia) said that the fight for human rights was against not only political repression but also social deprivation and economic exploitation. That applied to both individuals and countries. All categories of human rights were indivisible and interdependent and implementation of the Declaration on the Right to Development would help to fulfil the goals of both the International Covenants on Human Rights.

56. Development was a comprehensive concept which depended on the quality and extent of participation by both the State and individuals. Successful development efforts in a number of east and South-East Asian countries had proved to be a crucial factor for achieving not only broad socio-economic progress, but also greater democracy and respect for human rights.

57. An understanding of the close relationship between the realization of the Declaration on the Right to Development and the enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms should bring about cooperation amongst States, particularly, within the United Nations system, but such cooperation had been prevented by the practice of considering civil and political rights almost

exclusively. The situation had been aggravated by the increasing pressure on developing countries through the use of country reports and the special rapporteur procedure. Attempts had even been made to link the question of civil and political rights to the conduct of bilateral relations and international development cooperation. The Commission was increasingly viewed as a body monitoring civil and political rights in selected third-world countries, some of which were being punished through bilateral and multilateral assistance programmes.

58. At the same time, there had been much opposition to attempts by the developing countries to stress the importance of implementing the Declaration on the Right to Development. Such opposition could not but be construed as a deliberate move on the part of developed countries to maintain their predominant economic situation and perpetuate North-South inequalities.

59. The Secretary-General's report (E/CN.4/1993/16) contained a number of interesting proposals for the implementation and promotion of the Declaration on the Right to Development and an account of the obstacles thereto. His delegation did not agree, however, with the statement in paragraph 34 of the report concerning the position of the developing countries. Those countries had repeatedly appealed for a United Nations process to monitor the implementation of the Declaration on the Right to Development, while rejecting moves to link human rights issues to development efforts in the form of conditionalities in United Nations-funded development programmes.

60. There was much to support the view that the rich developed countries did not want a struggle for human rights, in the context of the right to development, and a struggle for human dignity to be important components of United Nations cooperation on human rights. They preferred to confine the discussion on human rights to civil and political rights, as it enabled them to place countries of the South in the "dock" at the Commission, while maintaining their dominance over the world economy. Such an adversarial approach ran counter to the letter and spirit of the Charter and would not advance the aims of the International Covenants on Human Rights.

61. Human Rights cooperation in the United Nations framework must undergo a major reform that allowed for serious consideration of the implementation of the Declaration on the right to development based on a comprehensive and holistic approach. It was in that spirit that his delegation and others were preparing a draft resolution on the realization of the right to development which would establish a mechanism to monitor the implementation of the Declaration and report to the Commission on an annual basis.

62. Mrs. SILVERA NUÑEZ (Cuba) said that human rights were indivisible and that among them a predominant place was occupied by the right to development, namely, sustainable economic growth accompanied by a progressive increase in socially adequate welfare. The adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 41/128 implied a commitment by the international community to make every effort to meet the challenges of development at the global level and to resolve the serious problems confronting the developing countries. The Declaration had remained a dead letter, however, and no progress had been made in its implementation.

63. The economic and social situation of the developing countries was truly tragic and the gap in the level of development between the countries of the North and those of the South was constantly widening. Statistics revealed a serious deterioration in the living conditions of the developing countries, where more than 70 per cent of the economically active population was unemployed or underemployed, more than a billion persons lived in conditions of absolute poverty, 180 million were suffering from serious malnutrition and over 1 billion persons were illiterate. In 1990 alone, 12.9 million children had died, including 7 million before they were one-year old.

64. It could be unequivocally stated that the majority of the industrialized countries had direct responsibility for the plight of the underdeveloped countries. Colonial and neocolonial domination had deformed their economies and reduced them to mere suppliers of primary commodities. That was the international division of labour as established by the countries of the North in their relations with the countries of the South, characterized by a lack of access to the markets of the developed countries, growing protectionism, unequal terms of trade, dumping, debt servicing, high rates of interest, reverse transfer of resources, the brain drain, and an absence of technology transfer.

65. Special attention should be paid to the phenomenon of external indebtedness, the perfect instrument for maintaining the neocolonial dependence of the underdeveloped countries. Between 1982 and 1990, the reverse transfer of resources had increased by at least $432 billion and the debt crisis had led to a tremendous increase in poverty, more than 500,000 children dying every year as a direct consequence of debt-related problems. In Latin America the number of poor people amounted to 62 per cent of the population, not less than 84 million of whom lived in extreme poverty.

66. Attempts were still being made to advocate the application of adjustment programmes or policies in the developing countries without any in-depth analysis of their social effects on the most disadvantaged sectors of the population or on the efforts being made by many of those countries to achieve development and promote human rights. It was regrettable that the Secretary-General's report (E/CN.4/1993/16) did not analyse in depth those genuine obstacles to development, indicating those responsible, and did not recommend practical and realistic measures to achieve a genuine solution of the problem.

67. The economic blockade which the United States had been imposing on her country for more than 30 years was an attempt to subvert its society and destroy the political and social system chosen by its people by depriving the country of essential goods, including medicines and food. That blockade, which constituted a flagrant violation of the standards of international law and of the Principles of the Charter, was designed to deprive a people of its right to development.

68. Mr. SHARP (Australia) said that civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights which were indivisible and interdependent, were all of equal status and importance and the implementation of one set of rights could not justify the neglect of the other. The practical consequence of the principle was that developed countries must understand the importance attached

by developing countries to the right to development and to the alleviation of poverty. Moreover, while the practical implementation of policies to advance economic and social rights was the responsibility of Member States and of the United Nations bodies concerned with economic and social development, it was perfectly proper for the Commission to make recommendations on the manner in which such implementation should be monitored.

69. To ensure more effective monitoring of the implementation of economic and social rights, it was essential for a dialogue to be developed between the bodies active in development and those concerned with the promotion of economic social and cultural rights. Universal accession to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights would clearly strengthen the international commitment to the promotion of those rights, but the effectiveness of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights could be improved.

70. In that connection, he welcomed the decision taken by the Economic and Social Council in 1992 to extend the Committee's meeting time so that it could address its backlog of reports. However, more could be done, in other respects also. The Committee could publicize breaches or acts of omission by States parties, offer recommendations to the parties to help them fulfil their obligations, urge the parties to attach greater importance to their reporting obligations and give non-governmental organizations a more active role in its work.

71. Other treaty bodies could increase their scrutiny of economic, social and cultural rights. The appropriate Committee could pay particular attention to article 5 (e) of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Committee on the Rights of the Child could look more closely at the economic, social and cultural rights of women and children, respectively. In addition, the Commission's special rapporteurs could pay greater attention to non-compliance by States with their obligations in the area.

72. At the forthcoming World Conference on Human Rights, delegations should consider practical measures to advance the effective implementation of economic, social and cultural rights and be guided, in so doing, by the need for machinery which was effective and did not duplicate activity and the need to draw on the existing expertise of all sections of the United Nations system.

73. The Right Reverend Monsignor TABET (Observer for the Holy See) recalled that, in his message on the occasion of World Peace Day, His Holiness the Pope had addressed the problem of poverty, which he regarded as a real threat to peace. Poverty was primarily an affront to the dignity of the human being, since each individual had the right to be able to provide for his personal needs and those of his family and to participate in the life and progress of his community. The Pope thus invited all the bodies concerned to consider the question of poverty not as an economic issue only, but primarily from the point of view of the poor people themselves, who were denied fundamental rights, particularly those to life, food, housing, health and development.

In that connection, it was noteworthy that world food production was largely sufficient to meet the needs of an increasing population, provided that the necessary resources were distributed accordingly.

74. What was required to ensure the integral development of every human being was an emphasis on a concept of development wider than the mere notion of growth in per capita income. Experience had shown that economic growth, though necessary to reduce poverty, was not in itself sufficient. To achieve the goal of reducing poverty, there must be effective democracy at the political and legislative level, both within States and in international relations.

75. There were welcome signs that the international community was becoming more attentive to such issues. Innovative solutions to development problems could be found, as the Holy See had suggested on various occasions, by means of an equitable sharing of the Earth's resources, fair distribution of profits, a healthy reaction against the excesses of consumerism, and world cooperation to preserve the human environment.

76. Due attention must be paid to poverty and the poor if the international community was to succeed in reducing the imbalances between North and South, between the rich and the poor. Unequal exchange rates, protectionist practices and the heavy burden of external debt were among the factors which deprived the poor of any chance of escaping from their poverty.

77. The prime characteristic of poverty was exclusion from society in the forms of unemployment, illiteracy, racism, sickness and the break-up of families. Such factors prevented an increasing number of individuals and communities from enjoying the Earth's resources and the benefits of economic activity. Such forms of exclusion were both the cause and consequence of poverty, and there could be no genuine development without universal democratic participation in building society.

78. His delegation accordingly welcomed the Sub-Commission's recommendation (draft resolution VII) that a special rapporteur be appointed to prepare a study on the question of human rights and extreme poverty. Such a study would enhance understanding of the impact of extreme poverty on the enjoyment and exercise of human rights, with due regard for the efforts made by the poorest themselves to exercise those rights and to participate in development in the communities in which they lived.

79. Mr. MICHAEL (Observer for Ethiopia), said that development and human rights were fundamentally interrelated concepts and it would be extremely difficult for any development strategy which disregarded that fact to achieve its goals. Individuals formed the subject, not the object, of development, and development strategies must focus on human-centred development. His delegation was pleased to note, therefore, from the Secretary-General's report (E/CN.4/1993/16) that United Nations development bodies and specialized agencies had incorporated some of those priorities into their policies. The Secretary-General also gave some useful indications (para. 17) of the kind of requests that the Commission should submit to the development agencies.

80. The rebuilding of the Ethiopian economy, which had been utterly devastated by decades of civil war and misguided policies, was one of the major challenges his Government had to face. It had embarked on a vast programme of economic reconstruction, based on new economic policies which gave wide-ranging incentives to the private sector. Its economic development programmes were determined by the people themselves, and were based exclusively on the principles of equity and social justice. In recognition of the genuine efforts it was making, and of its firm commitment to fundamental human rights and freedoms, his Government was receiving financial and technical assistance from international financing institutions and donor countries.

81. His Government, which on numerous occasions and in many different forums, had expressed its conviction that the full realization of human rights demanded economic development and prosperity, firmly believed that the issue, which was of great importance, should be included in the agenda of the forthcoming World Conference on Human Rights.

82. Mr. HOURORO (Observer for Morocco) said that the new world order which was currently unfolding and the transition to democracy in all parts of the world, were not occurring all that smoothly in most developing countries. It was difficult to promote universal respect for human rights while ignoring the fact that over one billion human beings were utterly without the means of subsistence, 800 million people were suffering from hunger and malnutrition, the number of refugees exceeded 17 million, more than 900 million people were illiterate and some 1.5 billion were without access to drinking-water or to medicine. In addition, at least 12 million deaths could be attributed to civil wars in the developing countries.

83. None the less, despite many uncertainties, it seemed that democratization through pluralism, the right to free association and the establishment of the rule of law had become an irreversible process but one that largely depended on genuine democratization in international relations and on the creation of a macroeconomic environment more conducive to growth and development.

84. The problems of external indebtedness and the vagaries of the international commercial, financial and monetary system had given rise to serious difficulties for the developing world in general and for Africa in particular. The exhaustion of natural resources, the problem of food shortages, the endemic spread of poverty, the proliferation of drugs and illegal migration were causing a deterioration of the human rights situation in much of the world.

85. In Africa, the process of democratization and the establishment of the rule of law were encountering many difficulties, sometimes leading to collective tragedy, which were largely linked to the disintegration of the economic fabric. Indebtedness currently amounted to 106 per cent of the continent's gross national product. The least developed countries had become marginalized over the last decade and Africa, where more than half of those countries were located, was in an inexorable process of decline. The figures spoke for themselves, and it was essential that Africa and the international community should take joint action to counter those negative trends. In that

connection, the recent steps to reduce debt represented a positive change and there was some hope of development financing for the countries of the South.

86. At the Commission's forty-eighth session, there had been a call for efforts to adopt measures conducive to the establishment of an advantageous climate for development. In the absence of such a programme, the gap between nations could only widen. The growing demand for democracy could not be confined to the political arena, but must also extend to recognition of economic rights and a global reorientation of economic policies.

87. Sustainable development, namely, development which was economically efficient, socially just, culturally specific and environmentally sound would require an optimum balance between State intervention and the laws of the market, and an international economic environment which was coherent, predictable and free from distortions prejudicial to the growth and development of all nations.

88. Mr. KUBA (Observer for Iraq) said that the right to development, which was enshrined in Article 55 of the Charter of the United Nations, and the interrelationship between economic progress and respect for human rights, had been affirmed in a series of Commission documents, in the General Assembly and, most recently at the Summit Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement held at Jakarta, Indonesia.

89. The situation in his country, however, was clearly at variance with the overriding goal of economic and social justice. Iraq's citizens and their families endured conditions of severe deprivation in their day-to-day lives due to the continuing economic blockade imposed by a small number of influential States within the United Nations. The country's economy was being slowly strangled. That policy was difficult to reconcile with the commitments undertaken by Member States under the Charter, especially as Iraq had fully implemented all its obligations under the resolutions adopted by the Security Council following the Gulf crisis.

90. The note verbale dated 4 January 1993 from his country's Permanent Mission addressed to the United Nations Centre for Human Rights (E/CN.4/1993/77) gave figures for the number of deaths in Iraq due to malnutrition and the unavailability of medicine. Children in particular were being deprived of basic health care, and faced additional hardship as a result of the lack of educational resources. Iraqi farmers were unable to maintain tractors and irrigation systems due to the embargo on spare parts, the result being diminished food production and consequent malnutrition.

91. In view of that continuing and unwarranted suffering, he hoped that the Commission would raise its voice on behalf of the individual Iraqi citizen's right to a decent minimum standard of living and the right of Iraqi society as a whole to balanced social and economic development.

92. Mr. MBARUSHIMANA (Observer for Rwanda), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the representative of Europe-Tiers Monde had strongly condemned the lack of development in Rwanda, which he had attributed to human rights violations. While it was true that many arrests were being effected in Rwanda, they were not, as alleged, the work of police and military

personnel responsible to the Rwandese President but were being carried out by duly-appointed judicial authorities empowered to prosecute persons implicated in the recent ethno-political disturbances. The aim of the arrests was to punish all those responsible for human rights violations, which had been strongly condemned by his Government.

93. His Government acknowledged with regret that many people had been killed in hostilities, in excesses which it had not proved possible to control, or in the inter-ethnic and political strife which had ensued. It was, however, completely false to claim that they were the result of a deliberate policy on the part of the Government to exterminate the Tutsi minority.

94. The international commission of enquiry mentioned by the representative of Europe-Tiers Monde, whose work had been facilitated by his Government, had investigated all human rights violations in Rwanda since the outbreak of the war. The Government had welcomed the commission's report and had undertaken to implement the recommendations contained therein. The representative of Europe-Tiers Monde had, most surprisingly, failed to mention the massive human rights violations committed by the FPR-Inkotanyi from the outset of the murderous war which it had unleashed. It had committed unimaginable atrocities against local administrative and political authorities and the civilian population in general, raping women of all ages and destroying hospitals and health centres.

95. It was also surprising that the representative of Europe-Tiers Monde should have condemned the lack of democratic discussion in Rwanda, a country which had 16 political parties and a transitional democratic Government in which 5 political parties were participating. In any case, his delegation fully agreed that negotiations constituted the only means by which a definitive solution could be found to all the political problems underlying the war.

96. Lastly, he wished to point out that the mission of the French army in Rwanda was strictly confined to safeguarding French nationals and other foreigners and protecting French interests, as the delegation of France in the Commission could testify.

The meeting rose at 6.00 p.m.